

Interview H0023: with Shatra Rimshi Ganden Paljor [tib. bshad sgra rim bzhi dga' Idan dpal 'byor], (India, August 21, 1981) : Part No. 6 of 6

Shatra was a well known aristocratic official from one of the highest and wealthiest families in Tibet. The interviewee talks about the Khyungram incident and about the change in regents. He also mentions the American Tolstoy's visit and the Kong Chuzhang incident. He talks about how the Tibet-Mongolian Office sent Shen Chuzhang to Lhasa and how the Tibetan Government set up the Foreign Office led by two Dzasa. He tells how Geshe Sherab went to China and was given a title by the Guomindang and how the Tibetan Government stopped him from coming to Tibet with Guomindang officials. He also describes the arrival of the Heinrich Harrer and Aufschneider and how they built the dams, power station and planted trees in Lhasa. He also discusses how Richardson told the Tibetan Government that if the Tibetan delegates attend the General Assembly of the Guomindang this would harm the relations between them and the British. He relates in detail to the Lhündrub Dzong incident and describes how Taktra demoted pro-Reting officials like Phünkhang Jedrung. Finally, he discusses in detail the Reting incident including his arrest and imprisonment in Sharchenjog in the Potala and his own role in arresting Reting's Dzasa (managers) in Lhasa.

At that time [Reting's Regency], Khyungram's [tib. khyung ram] house was also sold.

Q

You mean at the time of Reting they sold the house that was confiscated from him, right?

A

Yes, after the house was confiscated, it was sold by the government.

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Q

Did they do that purposely to offend people? [tib. bkyag bkyag byas]?

A

They sold the house, thinking the owner might claim it in the future. So [Khyungram](#) didn't have a chance to claim it [later].

Q

When they sold the house, the money would be collected by the government, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Later, when they returned their property to [Khyungram](#), they didn't refund the money for the house, right?

A

Yes. What they got was that they were allowed to become lay officials and they got their estate back.

Q

The estate had not been given to others, right?

A

Yes. During that period, Khyungram's estate was made into a [governmneet] estate with an estate manager (tib. [shidö](#) [gzhis sdod]) to manage it.

Q

Where was Khungram's estate located? Was it in [Tsang](#) [tib. gtsang]?

A

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Yes, it was located in Panam [district] Norbu Khyungtse [tib. pa snam nor bu khyung rtse].

Q

Was that a big estate?

A

It was a middle size aristocratic estate.

Q

What happened after that?

A

Later, [Khyungram](#) himself was unable to come back, but his children were allowed to become lay officials.

Q

Did he have several children?

A

He had only one son who became a lay official and then they gave them back their estate.

Q

Did you tell me that after Khyungram's misfortune, Reting's Regency didn't last long?

A

Yes. It was in the same year, the Iron-Dragon Year, when Reting resigned. Reting said that it would not be okay for him if he didn't go into retreat. He insisted on resigning, although the Kashag insisted that he not resign. He still refused and swore that he needed to resign.

Q

What was the main reason for Reting's resignation?

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A

I didn't know the main reason. People were talking differently according to one's own wishes or likes. Some people were saying, "Reting had a great thought and he controlled his power and resigned at the zenith of his fame and power when all of his opponents got defeated so in the future his Labrang would be stable."

Some other people were saying, "Since Reting's celibacy was not pure, he thought that it would not be okay if he ordained the Dalai Lama. Therefore, he had to resign." He also recommended [Taktra](#) as his replacement as Regent, saying that he is definitely suitable to be the Regent. After that, the Kashag sought the advice of the Dalai Lama saying that Reting has sworn he will resign the Regency and there wasn't any chance to request him not to. He told us to tell [Taktra](#) to become the Regent. Then the Dalai Lama also told them to request his tutor [Taktra](#).

After they sought permission from the Dalai Lama, the Kashag went to request [Taktra](#) and he accepted, so at the end of the Iron-Dragon year Reting became the ex-regent. [Taktra](#) became the regent on the 1st day of the 1st Tibetan month in the Iron-Snake Year. He held the internal ceremony in the Phodrang Sarpa [tib. pho brang gsar pa] in Lhasa. Then he went to the Potala and the main ceremony was held where all the government offered him [khata](#) scarves.

Q

This was in 1941, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Normally, when the regent resigned, would they have to hold a kind of farewell ceremony?

A

I forgot to tell you something. He told the Assembly that he was going to resign. The Assembly insisted [he stay], but he didn't listen to them. When [Taktra](#) held the ceremony, both of the regents gathered there. Reting came up from [Shide](#) [tib. bzhi sde] [his

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monastery in Lhasa] with his retinue elaborate like an incumbent regent. Usually, he would stay in the room of the regent [tib. shod gzim chung], but on that day he stayed in the Eastern Room in the Potala [tib. shar rgyud gzim chung]. Then [Taktra](#) came to the Potala with an elaborate retinue and stayed in the room of the regent.

Q

What is the Eastern Room?

A

This was the Dalai Lama's eastern room. The ceremony was held in the room called nyiwo [tib. nyi 'od] and all the government officials offered [khata](#) scarves to both of the regents.

Q

When both of the regents were seated, how did they arrange their thrones?

A

They were arranged in a line. Reting's throne was placed on the right side of the Dalai Lama's throne and the throne of the new regent was placed next [tib. gsham] to that in line.

Q

Were the heights of the thrones the same?

A

Yes.

Q

Were the thrones placed side by side [tib. gshib gshib]?

A

Yes. They were placed one after the other [tib. gcig gis gcig la mthud], but there was a gap between the thrones. On that day, the Ex-Regent sat at the head.

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Q

On that day, Reting became the ex, right?

A

Yes. When [Taktra](#) came to the room of the regent, he took over the power of the regency and the seal of the regency. The officials offered [khata](#) and then the new regent was confirmed.

Q

Were the seals left in that room?

A

Yes.

Q

Did they have to count the seals and hand them over?

A

Probably. the [Yigtsang](#) Office would hand over the seals. At the beginning, the regent would seal all the [khata](#) that would be offered to the main statues. This was called thamphü [tib. tham phud]. Then he would offer them to the statues. When [Taktra](#) became the new regent, they had to make a new seal.

Q

Whenever a new regent came, a new seal had to be made, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Why?

A

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At the time of the Reting Regent, he also made a seal. When [Langdün](#) and Reting were working jointly, they used the Silön's seal which was purple in color because red and black ink were mixed together.

After [Langdün](#) resigned, Reting made a new seal and used red ink.

Q

What kind of design was carved on the seal?

A

They might have carved some auspicious words in front of the Reting's name. Like, "May Reting Huthogthu prosper." [tib. rwa sgrenq hu thug thu dge legs 'phel]. [Taktra](#) also had the similar auspicious designs carved with his name.

Q

Did they carve words like the one in charge of politics Tibet [tib. bod kyi chab srid 'gan 'dzin] or the regent [tib. srid skyong]?

A

Yes. They had the word regent on it. You can find the designs in detail in the seal book (tib. thamdeb [tham deb]).

Q

Usually, would the [Yigtsang](#) Office keep the book of seals?

A

Yes. The [Yigtsang](#) had that. Private individuals also copied it and had some copies and there were also books in which the old seals were stamped. There were also materials on which the designs of the seals were written.

Q

The Kashag and the [Yigtsang](#) definitely had to keep the seal book, right?

A

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The [Yigtsang](#) had the seals of the Dalai Lamas and the seals of all the regents. But I didn't see a book of seals in the Kashag. As soon as the regency was over, the seals would be collected in the Potala storeroom called [Tse](#) Namse Gandzö [tib. rtse rnam sras gan mdzod]. When a new regent came, they kept the seal in the room called Nyiwö and handed it over to the new regent and held a ceremony at which tea, [droma dresi](#) and fried cookies [tib dkar spro] were served.

Q

Did they serve these to both the new and old regents?

A

Yes. And the two regents also offered "introducing Khata" (tib. netrö jeldar [sne sprod mjal dar]) to each other.

Q

Would they stand up and offer the [khata](#)?

A

They would stand up at the front of their throne and offer the [khata](#) to each other. I didn't see them doing that. I just heard about that. After this, the regents would be seated and all of the government officials would offer khatas to the Dalai Lama, then to the ex-regent, and then to the new regent.

Q

When Reting came back after the ceremony, did he have the same retinue?

A

Yes. When Reting's regency was over, they would appoint acting attendants [tib. mdun gzim], for example, the Acting Nendrön of the Regent was Khenjung Thubten Dawa [tib. thub bstan zla ba] who was from [Nechung](#) and used to be the [Laja](#) [tib. bla phyag]. The main attendants would go with [Taktra](#) and he would appoint his new [nendrön](#) (aides).

Q

The acting attendants were just appointed for one day during the ceremony, right?

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A

Yes. When they saw off Reting, I saw the acting [nendrön](#) receiving the [khata](#). After returning to [Shide](#), there weren't any officials from the government serving Reting -- only his Labrang's servants. At the time of the Reting's regency, he granted his manager "Chandzö dzasa" the title called Kungö Denthob [tib. sku ngo'i gdan thob].

Q

What is this title?

A

It was sort of equal to that of a [Shape](#). So when they met each other, both sides won't take off their hats as a salute. At the time of [Taktra](#), his Chandzö (manager) didn't take the title of Kungö Denthob but he was granted a Khenjung title and would be seated at the head of all the Khenjung rank officials, but below the [Trunyichemmo](#). Later he also became a Dzasa.

Q

But he was not the Kungö Denthob, right?

A

After becoming a Dzasa, he got the Kungö Denthob title.

Q

Later he was wearing the long yellow satin gown called dagotse [ch. da gua zi], right?

A

Yes. Later when [Taktra](#) became a Huthogthu, his Chandzö also became the "Great Chandzö" [tib. phyag mdzod chen mo]. At that time, even the Dzasa had his private seal called Dzasa Gertham [tib. dza sag sger dam].

Q

When he was a Khenjung, did he have that seal?

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A

Probably, but I am not sure about this.

Q

Where did he use this seal?

A

He just used it inside the Labrang. He didn't have any authority in the government.

Q

Did they change the Nendrön and the Shöndrön of the Regent in the morning of the day they held the ceremony of handing over the regency?

A

Yes. When [Taktra](#) was coming up through Deyangshar [tib. sde yang shar], I saw that Reting was looking down from the windows of the eastern room of the Dalai Lama.

Q

Reting had already arrived there, right?

A

Yes. In the courtyard of Deyangshar, the foreign dignitaries like the Nepalese Captain and the Bhutanese Drugpa Lochag [tib. 'brug pa lo phyag] and the house managers [tib. khang yod khang chung] of Lhasa were standing in line. Then [Taktra](#) went directly to the room of the Regent.

Q

When Reting was looking down from the window, did [Taktra](#) look up at Reting?

A

I was not paying attention. At that time, Reting was very fond of [Taktra](#), and it was said that [Taktra](#) was also the master lama of the regent, so he trusted him and told him to

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become the regent. But later it was said that their servants instigated trouble between them.

Q

That's how Reting's regency ended, right?

A

Yes.

Q

How long did he stay in Lhasa after that?

A

He didn't stay for long. He went to Reting soon after.

Q

All government officials had to go to see him off, right?

A

According to traditional custom, there was a fixed number of retinue of officials after the regency was over. Probably, the Rupön and the Gyagpön weren't there, but Reting was received and seen off like the incumbent regent.

Q

This was arranged by [Taktra](#), right?

A

Yes.

Q

So the enthronement of [Taktra](#) and resignation of Reting were held at the same ceremony and this was in 1941, the Iron-Snake Year, right?

A

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Yes.

Q

After Reting went to Reting, did he stay there for good?

A

Yes, until he came to the consecration [tib. rab gnas] for [Sera Je](#).

Q

In 1942, the Water-Horse Year, the Dalai Lama was ordained as a monk [tib. rab bzhes]. At that time, Reting didn't come to Lhasa, right?

A

Yes. The abbot who ordained [tib. rab bzhes mkhan po] the Dalai Lama was [Taktra](#) and Lingsang, the tutor of the Dalai Lama [tib. yongs 'dzin gling tshang], was also present.

Q

Was Lingsang appointed as the tutor after [Taktra](#) was enthroned?

A

Yes. After [Taktra](#) was enthroned, Lingsang was appointed as the Junior Tutor [tib. yongs 'dzin chung ba] and [Taktra](#) was the Senior Tutor [tib. yongs 'dzin che ba].

Q

What about after he became the regent?

A

He was still the Senior Tutor.

Q

How did they hold the ceremony for ordaining the Dalai Lama?

A

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This was held in the Water-Horse Year on the wooden floor in the front the Buddha's statue [tib. jo bo] in the [Jokhang](#).

Q

At that time, [Taktra](#) was the abbot who ordained him and there was Reting and the Lamas who assisted the Dalai Lama in the debating practice, the [Tsenshab](#) [tib. mtshan zhabs]. At that time, Trijang Rinpoche [tib. khri byang rin po che] was a [Tsenshab](#), right?

A

Yes, at that time, the government officials were waiting at the front of the temple [tib. mchod khang] in the [Jokhang](#) where they had put a satin cushion [tib. gos skyong]. So we couldn't see the place where the Dalai Lama was ordained. I heard at that time that the head ornaments of the statue of the Buddha were removed and made it into a form of an incarnation [tib. sprul sku].

Normally, the ordaining ceremony would be held elaborately and a huge heap of fried cookies would be set up which people were allowed to rush and grab as many as they wanted (tib. tönchen [tib. ston chen]).

Q

What did they do after the ordaining ceremony was over?

A

After that, the pile of fried cookies was set up in the courtyard of the [Jokhang](#) (tib. khyamra ['khyam ra]) and there were also new government officials holding their inauguration ceremony which included an audience with the Dalai Lama that was called shabdö [sarjel](#) [tib. zhabs sdod gsar mjal]).

Q

Was it more elaborate than the ceremony held when the Dalai Lama took the [geshe](#) exam [tib. mtshan bzhes]?

A

Yes. At that time, all the people, regardless of whether they were monks or laymen, burned incense and dressed up.

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Q

Do you remember who attended the ceremony, for example, famous incarnate lamas like Karmapa [tib. kar ma pa], [Mindröling](#) Trichen [tib. smin grol gling khri chen] and Dorjedrag Rinzin Chenmo [tib. rdo rje brag rig 'dzin chen mo]?

A

Normally, when they held the big ceremonies, the Trede Lekhung [tib. 'phral bde las khungs] in the Potala had the list of names of the famous lamas and they would send a notice to them and there would also be the highest strata of aristocrats, the [depön](#) midrag [tib. sde dpon mi drag] and the families of the Dalai Lamas.

Q

Do you remember who attended the Tönchen (fried cookie) Ceremony?

A

I don't remember clearly. Anyway, all the government officials who were in Lhasa were there.

Q

Later, when the Dalai Lama took his [geshe](#) exam, all of the high lamas were there and my late father also went.

A

This was more elaborate than the ordaining ceremony.

Q

The Tönchen ceremony was held in the courtyard of the [Jokhang](#). What were the procedures of this ceremony?

A

It was as same as the ceremony held on the 1st and 2nd day of the Tibetan New Year, but the tönchen was more elaborate than those. All of the lay officials were there and

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the Dalai Lama's dancing group [tib. gar pa] would perform dances. Probably, the tutor Lingsang did the explanation of the religious offering mandala [tib. man dral bshad pa].

Q

The Regent didn't give the explanation, right?

A

Usually, the Regent would not do that. At the time of getting ordained, the Dalai Lama changed his name and the new longevity prayer [tib. zhabs brtan] was also composed. At the beginning, Reting gave him the name, Jampel Ngawang Losang Yeshe [tib. 'jam dpal ngag dgang blo bzang ye shes], but at that time, they eliminated the "Jampal" and the "Yeshe".

Q

But now the Dalai Lama has the full name as mentioned above.

A

This was the name given by Reting when the Dalai Lama was ordained as a middle monk, Barma Rabchung [tib. bar ma rab byung] and when a strand of hair was ceremonially cut when he became a monk (tib. tsugshe [gtsug bzhes]). At the time of the main ordination as a monk [tib. rab byung sdom bzhes], [Taktra](#) gave him a new name and composed a new longevity prayer.

Q

The longevity prayer was composed by Trijang. I saw this in his complete literary works (tib. sungbum [gsung 'bum]).

A

I heard that the [Taktra](#) was very good at composing.

Q

On those occasions, what would the Nepalese and Muslims living in Lhasa do?

A

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All of the heads of the Nepalese and the Muslims and the representative of the Guomindang would attend the ceremony.

Q

Did the Indian Consulate in [Dekyilinga](#) [tib. bde skyid glin ga] also attend the ceremony?

A

Yes. The Indian Consulate and Butanese Drugpa Lochag would also attend the ceremony.

Q

Normally, how would they be seated there?

A

The main representatives would be seated on mattresses (tib. marböl [dmar 'bol]) and satin mats [tib. gos kha] with a table in front of each of them.

Q

What do you mean by marböl?

A

This was a kind of mattress covered with red woolen material.

Q

With which official rank were they used?

A

Probably they were seated like a Dzasa. No. Usually, the Dzasa didn't have the marböl mattress, so they might have been almost like Kungö Denthob and they won't sit crossed-legged; they would sit on chairs. They would also attend the New Year ceremonies on the 2nd day.

Q

Where would they be seated?

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A

They would be seated on the left side of the Regent.

Q

Wasn't the Kashag on the left side?

A

They sat facing the Dalai Lama's throne. On the right hand side, the Dalai Lama's family members would be seated and on the other side, the Khenche and the Khenjung would be seated. And the Regent and the Silön would be seated there. The foreign dignitaries would be seated on the opposite side of the Regent. On this side, the [Shape](#) and then the Dzasa and Theiji would be seated. Behind the [Shape](#), the lay officials like the Phogpön [tib phogs dpon], the Depön, the Rimshi and the Letsenpa were seated.

Behind the foreign dignitaries, the Trungtsi would be seated. Near the throne of the Regent, the lay officials who wore precious jewel ornaments (tib. ringyen [tib. rin rgyan]) would be seated.

Q

What was the ringyen for?

A

This was a costume from ancient Tibet.

Q

Was is from the time of the Dharma Kings [tib. chos rgyal]?

A

Not really from the Dharma Kings, but the head of the Ringyen, the Ringyen Tripa [tib. rin rgyan khri pa] would wear the costume of the King of Rimpung Ngawang Jigdrag [tib. rin spungs ngag dbang 'jigs grags]. The turquoise were very high quality. It was kind of extraordinary.

Q

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What was the Ringyan Tripa?

A

He was the main head of the Ringyen.

Q

Was this done according to seniority?

A

This should be done by a Fourth Rank official.

Q

What about the other Ringyen?

A

There was a Ringyen for serving tea called the [söpön](#) [tib. gsol dpon]. This should be done by a Seynampa. There was the Ringyen called Drönyer [tib. mgron gnyer] which should be done by a Letsenpa. Two of the incense holder Ringyen should be done by young Letsenpa. There were also two "hand holders," called changthenpa [tib. phyag 'then pa]. Sometimes, this would be done by a Seynampa and sometimes by a Letsenpa.

Q

Whose hands did they have to hold?

A

They had to go to the front of the Dalai Lama's.

Q

They didn't actually hold the hands, but showed the appearance, right?

A

Yes. They didn't actually hold the hands of the Dalai Lama. They just held a [khata](#) in their hands and showed the appearance of holding his hands.

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From among the Ringyen, the Drönyer, Pödzinpa [tib. spos 'dzin pa] [the incense holder] and the Changthenpa would sit at the front of the throne. Behind them were the monks of the Namgyal Tratsang [tib. rnam rgyal grwa tshang] who were skillful in chanting prayers and who would chant the prayers while the Ringyen Tripa would offer the eight auspicious signs (tib. tashi dzetag [bkra shis rdzas rtags]) to the Dalai Lama. The ordinary Ringyens would sit behind the Namgyal monks.

Q

Normally, would you have to do the Ringyen by turns or what?

A

The lower Secretariat of the Kashag, the Kashag shöpa [tib. bka' [shag](#) shod pa] would submit a plan for the Ringyen and when the lay officials were approved, they would send a notice to the lay officials to serve as Ringyen. Then the costumes and the ornaments of the Ringyen would be handed over by the monk officials in charge of religious decorations in the Potala, the Chödze dodampa [tib. chos rdzas do dam pa].

Q

What were the costumes and ornaments that the Ringyen wore?

A

The [hat](#) was called tsugsha [tib. gtsug zhwa]. It had a long ornament decorated with many pieces of turquoise called nashag [tib. sna zhag] hung at the left side near the ears, and a round earring called nyenpey [tib. snyan pad] on the right side. And there was a big golden pendant Gau [tib. ga'u] said to be from the times of the Dharma Kings, Srongtsen Gambo [tib. srong btsan sgam po] and Trisong Detsen [tib. khri srong sde btsan]. There were two kind of long necklaces called karshal marshal [tib. dkar shal dmar shal]; one was made from big pieces of amber the size of a child's fist and the other was made from coral. The boots were like the boots worn when they perform the religious dances (cham). During the ceremonies, the boots will be given from the Potala, but usually during the New Year, we would just borrow the boots from the Namgyal Tratsang Monastery which used then for the religious dance.

Q

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Was that the monk's boot that was called shasugma [tib. sha gzugs ma]?

A

It had a single leather sole and it was decorated with satin on both sides. Usually the case for a bowl, the phorshub [tib. phor shubs], would be hung on the backside, but the Ringyen would hang it at the front.

Q

Was it the same shape?

A

Yes, but it was little bigger and the [chupa](#) (dress) was made from colorful satin.

Q

Was the [chupa](#) like a gown or was it like a Tsechuma [tib, tshal phyu ma] which had openings on the sides?

A

It was like a gown.

Q

Did it have buttons?

A

No, we would tie a belt on it.

Q

You would wear it long and tie the belt, or you would pull it up and make it shorter and tie the belt like wearing a [standard dress] [chupa](#).

A

We would wear it long and tie a belt. Altogether there were about 40 Ringyen at elaborate ceremonies.

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Q

Did the Ringyen tripa have a separate costume?

A

No. He just had a satin cushion [tib gos skyong] and a satin mat with a green table in front and a curtain at the back side [tib. rgyab yol].

Q

Why did he have those?

A

Who knows!

Q

Was it because he represents the Rimpung King?

A

Probably, it was a right of the Rimpung King. Before the tönchen, two dances would be performed and then one more after the tönchen. Then the religious dance would be performed by the monks of Drebulinga [tib. 'bras bu gling ba].

Q

From where did the Drebulinnga [tib. 'bras bu glin pa] monks come?

A

It was an estate under the [Shöl](#) Lekhung [tib. zhöl las khungs].

Q

They would dance Acharya and the Chinese monk (ch. Hashang [he shang]), right?

A

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They also would perform the gods, nagas and nöjin [tib. gnod sbyin], of which, altogether, there were 8. While they performed dances, the Dalai Lama's dance group, the garpa [tib. gar pa] would play flutes.

Q

What kind of religious dance would the Drebulinga perform? They had a Hashang and two Acharyas, right?

A

After they performed the five different kind of offerings [tib. mchod sprin sna lnga] made by gods and the naga, etc, then the Drebulinnga would perform the Hashang and Acharya and blow the big dungchen [tib. dung chen] horn.

Q

What did the Hashang do in the dance? Was it the same Hashang that they used to dance on the 29th in the Potala?

A

Yes.

Q

Then the ceremony was over, right?

A

Yes. After that fried cookies were served and a monk would stand up [and narrate something] [tib. dkar spro tshogs lang].

Q

Usually, a [geshe](#) would do that on the Mönlam. At this time did an abbot stand up and do that?

A

Probably the abbots and better off monks did that.

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Q

Did the dronyerchemmo arrange for the monks to stand up?

A

Probably the [Tsenshab](#) did that, but I am not sure.

Q

What kind of titles did the [Tsenshab](#) have?

A

When Trijang Lama became a [Tsenshab](#), he already had the rank of "Assembly Trüku" [tib. tshogs chen sprul sku] so he could wear two tassels on his horse's neck. When he was given the high title called darhan, he would sit at the head of the [khenche](#) officials. Later, Gyamtsoling [tib. rgya mtsho gling] also got the same title.

Q

Some of the [Tsenshab](#) would wear a yellow satin gown (ch. dako [ch. da gua]) right?

A

This was worn when they got the high title called Darhan [mong. dar han]. Ketshang [tib. [ke](#) tshang] Rinpoche wore the Dako, but Trijang didn't wear it. The other [Tsenshab](#) like the Geshes and Serkong Rinpoche were fifth rank, so they would sit at the end of the Khenjung in the hall where the Dalai Lama was seated. Trijang and Gyamtsoling got their title because they were "Assembly Trüku." Altogether, there were 7 [Tsenshab](#).

Q

When Trijang was there, was Gyamtsoling sitting at the head with him

A

Probably, he was there because it was like being an abbot.

Q

The abbots of the three great monasteries were seated below the [Tsenshab](#), right?

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A

At the ceremonies, the two Lamas were next to the [Ganden Tripa](#) [tib. dga' ldan khri pa] named Shartse Chöje [tib. shar rtse chos rje] and Changtse Chöje [tib. byang rtse chos rje]. They were seated below the Senampa and were followed by the abbots of the three great monasteries.

Q

Didn't the Shartse and Changtse Chöje have two tassels on their horse's neck?

A

Probably, they had, but they were seated below the Senampa.

Q

Did the American officials come the same year when the Dalai Lama was ordained? There were two of them, right?

A

Yes.

Q

One was called Colonel Tolstoy, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Why did they come to Tibet? What did they say at that time.

A

They said that they came to deliver gifts like watches from the American President. They also might have had a letter.

Q

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This was not the first time they came to Tibet right?

A

Yes.

Q

They [Americans] also came at the time of the 13th Dalai Lama and they got a Lhasa Apso dog.

A

Was that an American?

Q

Yes, at that time, what did the Tibetans say regarding their coming?

A

It was said that this was the first time the Americans made relations with Tibet. They had brought a letter from Roosevelt. It was said they came to make [tib. sne sprod] relations.

Q

Where did two of them go?

A

They came to Lhasa and had an audience with the Dalai Lama. I don't know where they went.

Q

They were the two in the photo, right?

A

Yes.

Q

They had an audience with the Dalai Lama and the Regent and they also went to Reting.

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A

Probably.

Q

Dergesey [tib. sde dge sras] was their guide and they also went to Reting. At that time, didn't they talk about sending weapons?

A

I didn't hear about that clearly.

Q

It was said that they talked about weapons during the 2nd World War to be transported through Tibet and that we refused and said we won't allow use of our roads.

A

Probably not. I heard that it was the Guomintang who said that they were going to build roads through Dzayü [tib. rdza yul].

Q

After that, the Kong Chuzhang [ch. kong [qu](#) zhang] [director of the Guomintang office] incident occurred, right?

A

Yes.

Q

How did that happen? Did they say that he was the servant of the [Trunyichemmo](#) Ngagpala [tib sngags pa lags]?

A

I didn't know about that. I just heard heard that he fought with a Tibetan.

Q

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I heard that he was the servant of Ngagpala.

A

I didn't know about that. When the police came to arrest the fighters, they were hitting each other

Q

Did they fight severely?

A

They fought each other, but they didn't take out swords and daggers. When the police came to arrest him, he went to the Guomindang's [Kiyitöpa](#) [tib. skyid stod pa] house. So the polices followed him and arrested him in the house, but they [the Guomindang officials] detained the police.

Q

The police did the right thing because they acted lawlessly.

A

After the police were detained, probably they [police] opposed them [Guomindang]. Therefore, at night, he [the Guomindang official] went to [Norbulinga](#) and knocked on the main gate and requested that [Taktra](#) protect him.

Q

To knock the gate of the [Norbulinga](#) was very dangerous, right?

A

Yes. There wasn't any custom like this. He [the Guomindang Official] said, "There are a lot of disturbances in Lhasa." But they didn't open the gate because the gate was always barricaded with three beams. Probably, when the police were detained in [Kiyitöpa](#), some more police came to take them out from that place. So the Guomindang Official went to Norbukinga to request to protection. When people came up from [Norbulinga](#) to look at what happened, they found that it was calm in Lhasa and there were no police. Therefore, they [Tibetan Government] said, "There are no disturbances on Lhasa, but they

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[Guomindang Official] went to knock on the main gate of [Norbulinga](#). So Kong Chuzhang has to bear responsibility for this and he should leave Lhasa. As for the wireless operators, they can remain in Lhasa as before. After Kong Chuzhang returned to China, the new Director, Shen Chuzhang [ch. shen [qu](#) zhang] came.

Q

What kind of the things did they [the Guomindang] have?

A

They had the house and the guide.

Q

Did he come via sea through India?

A

Yes.

Q

Right after Kong was expelled, did the Chinese send Shen?

A

After that, the Tibetan-Mongolian Office (tib. pösog lekhung [bod sog las khungs]) sent Shen Chuzhang as the replacement of Kong.

Q

At that time, the Tibetan-Mongolian Office was already there, right?

A

Yes. It was there from the beginning. Then the Tibetan-Mongolian Office said that they were going to send Shen and he came via India to Tibet.

Q

It might have taken several years, right?

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A

Yes. At the time of the 13th Dalai Lama, the Foreign Office [tib. phyi rgyal las khungs] was set up for dealing with the foreign countries. But, for a time, they didn't have much work to do because the Kashag was dealing with the Indian Consulate and those things. Then the Kashag said, "Since the Kashag has other things to do, we can't deal with these matters. Therefore, we are going to set up a separate Foreign Office." A foreign office was newly established led by two Third Rank Dzasa: Liushar [tib. sne'u shar] and Surkhang Surpa [tib. zur khang zur pa].

Q

This was during the [Taktra](#) Regency?

A

Yes. The Foreign Office was kind of revived [tib. slar gso] as we used to have one in the past. Before that, there was another office called Gorshib Lekhung [tib. gor zhib las khungs] that specially dealt with the Nepalese after the Nepalese Consular officer called Captain came to Lhasa. The Kashag was dealing with the Indian Consulate and the Chinese Consulate.

Q

Was there a separate office called Gorshib Lekhung and did they hold office every day?

A

So there was only the Indian Consulate dealing with the Foreign Office and the Foreign Office did the receptions for foreigners like the Americans.

Q

When the Chinese came, did they go to the Foreign Office?

A

They didn't go to the Foreign Office. They dealt with the Kashag directly saying that this is an internal matter.

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Q

In the Water-Sheep Year, 1943, there weren't any special events, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Where was Geshe Sherab [tib. dge bshes shes rab] before the Wood-Monkey Year, 1944?

A

He was in China.

Q

Why did he have to go to China?

A

I didn't know for sure. He was among the people proof-reading the printing blocks of the Kangyur [tib. bka' 'gyur par zhus] text. I just heard that he did something that the former Dalai Lama disliked [tib. dgongs pa ma 'jug pa]. This was just outside talk. Anyway, the reason for him going to China was because somebody invited him.

Q

Probably the former Dalai Lama gave an order to him that he was not allowed to go out because he had joined the Guomindang, is that correct?

A

I don't have any idea about this. I just heard that the Dalai Lama didn't like him. After that, he went to China and stayed there for a long time.

Q

Did he stay in Beijing?

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A

Yes, he stayed everywhere in China.

Q

This was during the Guomindang, right?

A

Yes, probably he had a salary from the Guomindang. When he came to Tibet, there were Guomindang officials with him and they all arrived in Nagchuka [tib. nag [chu](#) kha]. I heard that probably [Dekyilinga](#) [the British Mission] told the Tibetan Government that there would be problems if you let him into Tibet.

Q

Who was in [Dekyilinga](#) then?

A

Probably, Richardson was there. I am not sure of that. When Geshe Sherab reached Nagchu, the Depön of the border guards [tib. sa srung] was Surkhang [Depön] and the Tibetan Government informed him that it would be okay for Geshe Sherab to come to Lhasa alone, but it would not be okay to let in the Guomindang Officials. So the Geshe had to go back to China.

Q

Surkhang Depön was a student of Geshe Sherab, right?

A

Yes, but he had to adhere to the order of the government. He told Geshe, "According to the order from the government, it would not be okay for you to come with the Guomindang Officials."

Q

At that time, the Geshe didn't say that Surkhang didn't help him, right?

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A

No, He couldn't say that because the government had made the decision.

Q

Didn't Geshe say that he didn't have any political matters to get involved with?

A

Probably not. Anyway, they were suspicious and didn't let them in.

Q

At that time, Geshe had a title from the Guomindang, right?

A

Yes, he might have had a high rank and salary because he was very famous.

Q

It was during the [Taktra](#) Regency?

A

Yes.

Q

How was the relationship between Geshe and [Taktra](#)?

A

It was also said that two of them didn't get along well so well.

Q

When did that happen?

A

This was when they were proof-reading the Kangyur.

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Q

It might be because Geshe Sherab was too learned.

A

Actually, they were from the same Tratsang (College).

Q

Probably, they were in the same Khamtsen (Residence), right?

A

No.

Q

Geshe was from Lumbum (Residence) [tib. klu 'bum], right?

A

Yes, and [Taktra](#) was from Hamdong (Residence) [tib. har gdong].

Q

Right after that, the American plane crashed in Tibet, right?

A

Yes.

Q

Where were you when the plane crashed?

A

I was in Lhasa.

Q

How did you know about it?

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A

It was probably around 10 p.m Lhasa time when I saw a plane was passing by.

Q

Did you see that?

A

Yes, there was only one plane.

Q

Did it sound like thunder?

A

No, it just sounded like "dar dar." And the dogs were barking.

Q

You heard a sound that you had never heard, right?

A

Yes. After a few days, I heard that the plane had crashed in Tsethang [tib. rtsed thang] in Lhoka.

Q

Did it crash in the sand?

A

Yes. I heard that they ran out of fuel and parachuted down.

Q

Where did they land?

A

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I heard that they were scattered and landed on the two sides of the river and some of the shepherds saw them. At that time, there was a Muslim who was living in the house called Labrang Nyingpa Tara [tib. bla brang rnying pa rta ra] which belonged to Thönpa and was located on the [Barkor](#) [tib. bar skor] Street. Probably, he knew English and he went to talk with the Americans. I heard when they saw the Tibetans, they were afraid of them. When the Muslim came, they could communicate with each other and they reported to the Kashag and they were brought to Lhasa on corvée horseback.

Q

What happened to the plane?

A

After they parachuted, the plane just crashed.

Q

Where did it fall?

A

They could only find broken pieces of the plane. There were three people in the plane.

Q

At that time, many material appeared for making shirts saying that this was from the plane, did they get that from the parachutes?

A

No. Those were brought from India. There wouldn't be much from that plane.

Q

Before that, where did the American stay after they landed?

A

They just stayed there because they couldn't communicate. I heard when the local district head heard that they had landed, he went to look at them. After they came to Lhasa, the Kashag handed them over to [Dekyilinga](#). I saw them riding horses and arriving in Lhasa.

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They were brought to [Dekyilinga](#) and they also took photos of them. I heard the Americans gave the Muslim a gun and that later they went back via India.

Q

Did they have time to relax and stay in Lhasa?

A

Yes, they stayed for several days and then they left. I heard that they were showing their backs which had English letters and Chinese characters saying, "Please help them wherever they land." But at that time nobody could read it.

Q

It was a good coincidence that the Muslim was there, right?

A

Yes.

Q

In that year, Heinrich Harrer arrived, right?

A

Yes, there were two Heinrich Harrers.

Q

Not really two Heinrichs. The other one was called Aufschneider.

A

They were dressed like beggars.

Q

I heard that Tsarong [Sawangchemmo](#) [tib. tsah rong sa dbang chen mo] kept them. Did you see them?

A

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Yes, I did. I saw them on the circumambulation road around the city and I heard that Thangmey [tib. thang smad] kept them.

Q

How did you see them on that road?

A

They were dressed like beggars and Heinrich was wearing a pair of very old worn out woolen Tibetan boots (tib. sönpa [zon pa]) with leather soles that were worn out and their [chupa](#) 9gowns) were also torn up. When I saw them they were smiling. I could see that they their faces looked Western. Though they couldn't communicate, they were showing an appearance of liking us. After that, Thangmey kept them because he knew English and they could communicate and probably, they told Thangmey to help them. Then they changed their clothes and people knew them and he also came to Tsarong and they went everywhere to the houses of the aristocrats. They also learned Tibetan very quickly. They said that they were prisoners of the British during the 2nd World War and had escaped from prison. When they came through the remote places and didn't have clothes, they just stuck their backs to each other to keep themselves warm and they also swam in Lake Manosarawa [tib. mtsho ma pham]. At that time, the Kyirong district head [tib. skyid rong] was Maya [tib. rma bya].

Q

Was this the Maya who is now here?

A

No, it was his elder brother. He was fined for not stopping the foreigners from coming to Tibet.

Q

How could Maya stop them. Maybe he didn't know about this, right?

A

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Yes, but it was like the proverb, "If there is a famine, the poor people have to suffer and if there is a disaster, the head has to bear the responsibility.[tib. chag sgo gyung na 'go/ [mu](#) ge byung na tha]. Nobody expelled Heinrich.

Q

I heard that Tsarong saved them.

A

I am not sure about this. Later, Heinrich taught us how to plant the trees under the [Jogpori](#) [tib. lcags po ri] mountain which were to be used for the fuel during the Mönlam Festival. He also build a dam on the Lhasa river. He told people that they need to build the dam with a slope so it would be more stable. This was called the German Dam.

Q

Before that, people didn't know that dams should be build with a slope, right?

A

Yes. He also drew two maps of Lhasa City and he handed one to [Taktra](#) and the other to the Foreign Office. The two Germans also built the power station in Shangthab [tib. gzhang thab].

Q

At that time, did the government pay them salary?

A

Yes, they were paid salaries.

Q

Did they pay them enough salary?

A

Yes, they did.

Q

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I remember that Heirich Harrer was wearing a kind of [chupa](#) 9gown) made from American serge.

A

Probably. At that time people didn't know that they were spies.

Q

Actually, they were not spies.

A

Later it was said that they were spies.

Q

Who said that they were spies?

A

People were saying that probably they were spies from a foreign country.

Q

The people just recklessly said that, right?

A

This was just their opinion. We didn't know for sure what they were. They built the power station, but they were unable to produce electricity.

Q

Did the trees planted by the German grow well?

A

Yes.

Q

Did they use them for the fuel for the Mönlam?

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A

Yes.

Q

Did they plant it in a different way?

A

Probably not. Before that, the government didn't take care of that place and plant the trees though there was a good source of water there. After Chamdo was liberated, the two of them secretly ran away.

Q

Did they tell the Tibetan Government?

A

Probably not. I don't know about that. Probably, they didn't dare to stay any longer.

Q

Did they go together?

A

Yes.

Q

Did they go to through [Yadong](#)?

A

Yes, they went to India. I heard that when the Germans built the power station in Shangthab, they dug the ground and discovered some antiques from under the ground.

Q

What kind of things did they dig out?

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A

They dug out some clay bowls which had a sharp point at the bottom to be stuck in the ground. In those ancient times, it seemed that Tibetans didn't have sky burials as they found the corpses of a couple buried together.

Q

How could they die together?

A

Probably, after one of the couple died, the other died and was buried near that. The Germans said that this was a sign that people didn't have the custom of sky burials.

Q

Did they offer the things that they dug up to the government?

A

No. they didn't. They just kept them for themselves.

Q

All of these things happened in the same year -- the crash of the American plane, the arrival of the Geshe Sherab and the Germans. In the Wood-Horse Year, in 1945, the mission to give "Congratulation for Military Victory" [tib. g.yul rgyal bkra shis bde legs] was sent, right?

A

This was after the 2nd World War was concluded.

Q

This was the year when the UNO was held, right?

A

Yes. Then we said that we have to congratulate the allies [tib. mthun phyogs rgyal khab] for their military victory.

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Q

Did our government say that?

A

Yes. But I don't know what caused them to say that. It was said that we have to send a mission to congratulate the Chinese Government, the American Government, the British Government and the Indian Government for their military victory. The government just thought about it and sent the mission. Nobody told them to send it. Outwardly, it was said like this, but I didn't know the internal plan. The head of the mission was the Dzasa Rong Paling Thubten Samphel [tib. rong dpal gling thub bstan bsam phel] and Dzasag Kusangtse [tib. kun bzang rtse].

Q

Kusangtse is also called Kheme [tib. [khe](#) smad], right?

A

Yes. Kusangtse had been demoted from both his position and as a lay official [tib. las zhabs chabs cig], but later he was reappointed.

Q

Why was he demoted?

A

It was for a small matter that occurred during the Reting Regency.

Q

Who else were there in the mission?

A

There was Changöpa Dorje [tib. bya dngos rdo rje] and there were some other staff. They were sent to offer congratulations.

Q

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Where did they send them?

A

They were sent to India where they congratulated the Embassies of America and the British and then they went in person to China.

Q

What did they say when they congratulated them?

A

I didn't hear about what they said. Anyway, probably it was for restoring friendly relation [tib. mthun sgril slar gso] with those countries. When they went to China, at that time, Chiang Kaishek was there and they congratulated him.

At that time, the wife of the Kusangtse got sick and when they had to delay for awhile, the National Assembly of the Guomindang [ch. guo min da hui] was held so they attended the Assembly meeting as observers [tib. zur bzhugs]. At that time, the contradiction between [Tashilhunpo](#) and the Tibetan Government existed. The people from [Tashilhunpo](#) attended the meeting, so it was also said that the Tibetan mission went there to see what the [Tashilhunpo](#) people were saying.

When they were going for the congratulations mission, Richardson told the Kashag, "I heard that you are sending people to attend the National Assembly of the Guomindang. If you send them, the Agreement signed between Tibet and the British is not yet concluded [tib. mjug skyong]. Therefore, it would cause harm to this. Actually what is going on?" Saying it was not yet concluded means the Chinese had signed the agreement [Simla], but they hadn't put their seal on it. The Kashag said, "They are not going to attend the Assembly Meeting. They went there exclusively to congratulate the military victory."

Q

But they attended the meeting as observers, right?

A

Yes. Actually they didn't have any instructions to attend the meeting and give speeches.

Q

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When the mission came back, did the government fine or punish them or scold them for attending the assembly?

A

Probably not. I didn't hear anything about interrogating them.

Q

They were just left like this, right?

A

Yes. I heard that they told the government, "We went to check [tib. so lta] whether the officials of [Tashilhunpo](#) were taking the name of Tibet and talking recklessly. We also went there as private individuals and we didn't have instruction from the government."

Q

If they went as private individuals, the government didn't say anything, right?

A

Probably they didn't say anything.

Q

Probably, they might have had some kind of internal instructions, right?

A

Yes, probably.

Q

There was only one mission for the congratulations, right?

A

Yes. Among the staff of the mission, Kusangtse Rimshi [tib. rim bzhi] was there.

Q

How did they come back from China?

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A

They came back via sea. Kusangtse Dzasa's wife died in China. When they came back, they also told the government, "We didn't wait for the Assembly meeting, we had to delay coming back because Kusangtse's wife was sick." At that time, the incarnation of the Panchen Lama was yet to be confirmed and [Je Jigme](#) [tib. ces 'jigs med] and those people were holding a kind of grudge against the Tibetan Government.

Q

After this mission came back, the meeting called the United Conference of the Eastern Countries [tib. shar phyogs rgyal khab kyi mnyam sbrel tshogs 'du] was held. Was that kind of the same time or not?

A

I don't remember the year. In the Wood-Bird Year, the Lhündrub Dzong incident occurred.

Q

This was in 1945, right?

A

Yes.

Q

What was the cause of this incident?

A

The district head of Lhündrub Dzong was the brother of [Trunyichemmo](#) Bumthang [tib. 'bum thang]. The district had been granted as the "salary district" for the [Trunyichemmo](#). While his brother was in Lhündrub Dzong, the loan collectors of [Sera Je](#) College [tib. byes] came to pursue their loans by force. So when something went wrong, the loan collectors treated the [miser](#) harshly. Therefore the district head told the monks that they shouldn't do that because the government had made a payment arrangement [tib. rgyas dpyad] for the loans. So the people have to pay the loan and you have to collect them in a proper way [tib. sprod shes len mkhas]. He spoke kind of powerfully, because the

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[Trunyichemmo](#) was backing him. But the monks acted rashly [tib. don ma go]. The monks probably had a mutton leg to be given to the district head as a meeting gift [tib. zhu rten] and finally the monks hit him with the mutton leg. After that, they talked more and more strongly and the monks beat the district head up recklessly and he was injured and became sick and later died because of this beating. Because of this, the [Trunyichemmo](#) submitted a petition and reported that the district head had implemented the law for collecting the taxes according to the instructions from the government, but the monks of the [Sera Je](#) acted rashly using their monastery as their backer and beat him to death.

After that, the Regent appointed an Investigation Committee [tib. zhib sa] consisting of the eight Trungtsi plus the Senior Fourth Rank monk official, Khenche Dompör [tib. mkhan che gdong por] and Samdrub Phodrang [tib. bsam grub pho brang]. Then the committee called the [Sera Je](#) monks who were involved in the case for interrogation. However, the monks didn't show up. So they talked to each other and the government told them to come.

Q

What did they say when they didn't show up?

A

Probably they said that they don't need to come to the committee because they were collecting the loans for the sake of the supplies and offerings of the monastery, and that it happened accidentally and they didn't purposely beat him up. Later, the members of the assembly of [Sera Je](#) came to the committee. When they interrogated them, they didn't have much to say because they had beat the district head to death. So finally, they were punished. The main person called Rebegyau [tib. re be rgya'u] and many monks were whipped and banished.

Because [Sera Je](#) was the [tratsang](#) of Reting, this offended the [ex-] Regent a lot. Actually, the Investigation Committee didn't have any choice but to issue the verdict, but this incident caused bad feelings between the two Regents.

At that time, [Trunyichemmo](#) Bumthang was staying in the Potala until the case was settled. He said that he didn't dare to stay at home in Lhasa because he was afraid the monks would do something.

Q

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Where was the Investigation Committee held?

A

It was held in [Shöl](#) Printing House [tib. zhol par khang] at the front of the Potala. This was one of the causes of the contradiction between the Regents. The main reason was because [Taktra](#) didn't hand over the Regency. Because he didn't hand over the regency, it caused the incident.

Q

Before that, Reting told [Taktra](#) that he wanted the regency back, right?

A

Yes, I heard that he told [Taktra](#) that he had promised to hand over the regency.

Q

Reting resigned in 1938. So he was supposed to come back in 1941, but he couldn't come back until 1945, right?

A

Yes.

Q

At that time, Reting just got offended, but he didn't make any move, right?

A

Yes, but I heard that Reting wrote letters to the Regent requesting a lenient [tib. dpya [gang](#) yangs] settlement of the case. He didn't actually tell the Investigation Committee, but he might have internally told the members of the committee. At that time, many monks were made to ride oxen as they were banished.

Q

Do you know where they were banished to?

A

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They were banished to many districts like Hor Drachen [tib. hor dbra chen].

Q

Where did they banish Rebe gyau to?

A

I am not sure about this. Probably somewhere in the north.

Q

What happened to him after that?

A

Later, he came back and stayed in [Sera Je](#) again. He was not treated very badly.

Q

They were released when the Dalai Lama took the political and spiritual power, right?

A

Probably yes.

Q

After that, the Meeting of the Eastern United Countries was held in India, right? No, this was held in 1947.

A

Yes.

Q

Nothing happened in 1946, right?

A

Yes.

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Q

At that time, was there any incident where [Taktra](#) demoted the Pro-Reting officials and promoted the Pro-Taktra officials?

A

Yes. Phünkhang Jedrungla [tib. phun khang rje drung lags] was demoted. He was a favorite (tib. [jensel](#) [spyang bsal]) of the Reting. At that time, he was the head of the Lhasa Nyetsang [tib. lha sa gnyer tshang] [the office in charge of offerings and supplies in Lhasa]. He was also appointed to be one of the Khendrönlosum

Q

What is the [Khendrönlosum](#)?

A

There was a [Tsendrön](#) and a Lotsawa [tib. lo tsa ba] (an interpreter). Jedrungla probably was the [Tsendrön](#). He got the order from the Secretariat of the Regent, the Shöga [tib. shod 'gag], that he had to go to China. However, he insisted on resigning from this appointment. Therefore, the Regent got angry and demoted him both from his position and from the ranks of being a monk official.

Normally, when someone becomes a monk official, they had to take a pledge saying that they will serve efficiently at whatever position they receive regardless of whether it was civil or military. So he was told that he had violated this pledge when he said he did not accept the appointment as the [Tsendrön](#) to go to China.

Q

Was there anybody other than Phünkhang Jedrung?

A

Kusangtse and Jogtre [tib. lcog bkras] were also demoted.

Q

What happened to Jogtre?

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A

He was involved in something where [Kapshöba](#) was involved. At that time, [Kapshöba](#) had become a [Shape](#) and didn't like Jogtre. Jogtre also was a Reting follower. I heard that [Kapshöba](#) instigated something about him. Anyway, he was imprisoned in the prison near the [Jokhang](#) called Lhogyü [tib. lho rgyud].

Q

What was his crime?

A

Later there was an Investigation Committee and he was found innocent. When he was released, he could wear the red gown uniform of the [Laja](#) office head and he was not punished or fined. I didn't know clearly, but he was kind of accused of causing the contradiction between the Regents.

Q

During the [Taktra](#) era, there weren't many demotions, right?

A

Yes.

Q

When Reting had his misfortune, quite a number of officials were demoted, right?

A

Yes. There were quite a lot of officials demoted. Then in the Fire-Hog Year, the chaos between the two Regents reached its zenith. Mainly, [Taktra](#) put down all the followers of Reting.

For example, probably Reting disliked and was angry with Surkhang [Sawangchemmo](#). The house called Songra [tib. zong ra] where there were Nepalese shops belonged to Surkhang, and it was said that Surkhang offered this house to Reting. Outwardly it was offered as a bribe and internally it was to seek his forgiveness. Anyway, Reting didn't like Surkhang, but during the [Taktra](#) regency, Surkhang became a [Shape](#). During the

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Reting Regency, [Kapshöba](#) flattered him like a monkey, but he didn't get the position of [Shape](#). During Taktra's time, [Kapshöba](#) was appointed as a [Shape](#).

Lhalu and Reting also hatred each other, so Lhalu was just appointed as a Gandrön and he didn't appoint him to any other positions. But during Taktra's time, he became a Tsipön and soon after, he became a [Shape](#). Like this, the persons who Reting disliked became Shapes.

Q

How was Phünkhang Gung [tib. phun khang gung] demoted?

A

Phünkhang Gung had a special priest and patron relation with Reting and Reting also appointed him as a [Shape](#). Reting had great affection [tib. thugs brtse chen po] towards Phünkhang. Later, when Reting and [Taktra](#) were at odds, Phünkhang's relatives told Phünkhang, "Among the [Shape](#), you are the only one who was appointed by Reting. All the others were appointed by [Taktra](#). Therefore you had better resign when you are in a good position [tib. yag thog]." But he didn't resign and kept on going to the Kashag. Taktra's followers had a serious dislike towards Phünkhang, but they didn't have anyway to punish him related to the political work. So it became inconvenient [for Taktra] to demote Phünkhang right away. At this time, I am not sure how they plotted it, but Phünkhang Gung had a stepson who was had taken the monastic title, Chöndze. He was the son of Phünkhang's late wife.

Q

He was called Phünkhang Geshe la [tib. dge bshes lags], right?

A

Yes. When Geshela was wandering around, somebody got to him and told him , "If you submit a petition against Phünkhang at this time when the two regents are in conflict, your petition will be granted because you are the older son of Phünkhang. If you remain like this [doing nothing] and don't submit a petition to get a better share for your living support from Phünkhang [tib. 'tsho rten], you won't get anything."

Q

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Geshela was not the son of Phünkhang [Shape](#), right?

A

Yes. He was the son of Phünkhang's late wife.

Q

So they didn't take care of him, right?

A

Yes. The children of the new wife stayed in the family while Geshela was made to become a monk.

Q

He was a [chöndze](#) in Drepung's Minyag [tib. mi nyag] and he also passed the [geshe](#) exam.

A

He was called Geshela. At that time, Geshela thought of not submitting the petition and requested Phünkhang to give him a good support for his living because otherwise "I can't manage my livelihood." But Phünkhang still didn't take care of him because Phünkhang's wife had more verbal power than the Gung. Then Geshela accused Phünkhang's wife, saying she insulted [tib. mtshan smad] the Regent [Taktra](#). When [Taktra](#) came from the Potala to attend the assembly of the Mönlam Festival, Phünkhang's wife was there to see [Taktra](#). At that time, she said, "Nying Asong [tib. snying a song] is the wife [tib. zla bo] of [Taktra](#)." Based on this, Geshela submitted the petition and said that I am the real older son of Phünkhang, but they didn't take care of me. Phünkhang's wife has seized all the power in the family and she didn't take care of me. She is not a legitimate person [tib. krims mthun lugs mthun] and she insulted the Regent [Taktra](#). Therefore, I request the government investigate according to the law. Since I am the older son, please grant me a share like the sons of other feudal lords."

After he submitted the petition, the [government] ordered the office for settling law cases, the Deshib Lekhung [tib. sde zhib las khungs], to investigate the case. The Deshib Lekhung was led by two Trungtsi: [Trunyichemmo](#) Chömphe! Thubten [tib. chos 'phel thub bstan] and the Tsipön Lhalusey [tib. lha klu sras].

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The Deshib Lekhung called Phünkhang's wife and Geshela and interrogated them. At that time, Phünkhang's wife said, "I have never insulted [Taktra](#). Geshela has made a false accusation for gaining his own benefit. Actually, Geshela insulted [Taktra](#), because this word came from his mouth in the court. As for the matter whether Geshe had the right of getting a share from Phünkhang, I have something to report gradually." So the investigators were almost going to make the two parties lay down facing their heads together and lash them and make them give proof (tib. gobtrö tong [mgo sprod gtong]).

After that, both parties took measures to avoid having to do the gobtrö. In the beginning Phünkhang Geshela submitted the petition directly to the Dalai Lama [tib. gdong zhu'i snyan zhu]. For this, he got lashed. It was written in the verdict, "Phünkhang's wife is saying that she didn't insult [Taktra](#), but it seems that it is not certain that she wouldn't insult him because usually Phünkhang shape doesn't have any power at home. So this is a sign that Phünkhang's wife is controlling the [Shape](#) on the matters of the Kashag. According to this, it is not certain that she didn't insult [Taktra](#). If we have to punish her according to the law, the only possibility is to cut off one of her organs, but she will be exempt from this punishment and Phünkhang's estates called Kharag Jangbar [tib. kha rag lcang bar] and Langru [tib. glang ru] will be confiscated."

After the law case was filed, Phünkhang had already stopped going to the Kashag, so in the verdict it was said, "Phünkhang will be demoted from the position of [Shape](#), but he can retain the Gung title." Therefore, Reting was severely offended. So because of Geshela's petition, Phünkhang lost their estates and got demoted from the [Shape](#) position. Then right after that, Lhalu was appointed as the [Shape](#) to replace Phünkhang. When Lhalu was appointed right away, Reting disliked this even further, because he didn't like Lhalu.

Q

Geshela didn't get anything, right?

A

He got lashed.

Q

He didn't get the estates, right?

A

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Yes. But the verdict said that Phünkhang should pay him a grain salary during his lifetime.

Q

Was Phünkhang related to Reting?

A

No, but they were priest and patron and because of Phünkhang Jedrung, Reting also was very fond of Phünkhang.

Q

What happened to Phünkhang Jedrungla later on?

A

After he was demoted, he just stayed like that and then he had a stroke and died. That's how the regent put down some people and pulled up one's followers like the Tibetan proverb, "Put down the old man and pull up the old woman." [tib. spo [bo](#) 'gyel rmo [bo](#) bslangs]. I forgot to tell you something. When the monks involved in the Lhündrub Dzong incident didn't come to the Investigation Committee, they removed the yellow robe [of office], the chögö [tib. chos gos] of the abbots of [Sera Je](#) and Ngagpa. At that time the Ngagpa Khenpo (abbot) came to the Secretariat of the Regent according to the rules and his chögö was removed.

Q

Why did they remove the chögö of the Ngagpa Khenpo?

A

The monks of both [Je](#) and Ngagpa were involved in the incident though mainly, the monks of [Je](#) were involved in the beating. The [Je](#) abbot, Ngawang Gyatso [tib. ngag dbang rgya mtsho], who was a Triu [Khampa](#) [tib. [tre](#) hor khams pa] didn't come. He just sent his chögö and he secretly ran away.

I heard that Reting really liked Ngawang Gyatso who was a Tsorampa [tib. tshogs ram pa] Geshe. Reting said that he appointed him [Je](#) Khenpo because he trusted him. Later the government sent edicts to the district and estates saying, "The [Sera Je](#) Khenpo has

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escaped so all people should either kill him or arrest him." After that, one of the servants of the [chandzö](#) (manager) of the abbot was killed in Pembar Dzong [tib. dpal 'bar rdzong]. The abbot was not killed, but the head and hands were received saying that these were the head and the hands of the abbot.

In that year, the monks of [Sera Je](#) and Ngagpa didn't come to take their seats at the Mönlam. In that year also the Dalai Lama was invited to the assembly (tib. tshogpheb [tshogs phebs]) by Tsomönling [tib. tshe smon gling] or somebody. Although there was a great ceremony, the monks of [Je](#) and Ngagpa didn't come.

Later, the [Yigtsang](#) office told them to go and they attended the Mönlam. Later, the Guomindang took care of Ngawang Gyatso and granted him a title and paid him a salary.

Q

Later, China also treated him great and he came back and was something in [Dartsedo](#) [tib. dar rtse mdo], right?

A

Yes. He was the Vice Chairman [ch. fu zhu xi] of Xikang Province. He was also something in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

Q

I heard that he asked the Dalai Lama for an initiation for the Avaloketiswara empowerment [tib. thugs rje dbang chen] and saw him being seated quite highly probably among the Huthogthu incarnate Lamas [tib. rgyal sprul hu thog thu].

Nyungne Lama [tib. snyung gnas bla ma] and Khardo [tib. mkhar rdo] wrote many letters to Reting about how [Taktra](#) hatred Reting's followers saying, that we should definitely take revenge. In the beginning, Reting didn't listen to them and told them, "Don't do this. It doesn't matter. We can appeal to the [Taktra] Labrang like the proverb, "To approach the fire even if the fire burns you." [tib. mes 'tshigs mer gtugs]. If you do reckless things, it would not be good at all. Even now, when we didn't have the title of the Regent our followers also are facing hardship, and it is like the proverb, "Even if the stupa would turn upside down, the layers of the stupa would still be at the middle." [tib. chos rten mgo mjug log kyang/ bang rim sked par mnas kyi red] because Reting Labrang has not declined." However, after they told Reting many times, Reting changed his mind and agreed to a plan to oppose [Taktra](#). That's all what I heard.

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Q

So this was in 1947, right?

A

Yes. At that time, Reting sent the person called Triu Gyagpön [tib. [tre](#) hor brgya dpon] via Kham to Chiang Kaishek with a letter that said, "The way the Regent [Taktra](#) is governing the country is not good and I am concerned that the political situation in Tibet is also not good. Furthermore, he is causing serious hardship for the people. In the past, I handed over the [power] to him regarding him as the better one, but now he is planning to hold on to the regency continuously and is not planning to hand it back to me. Therefore, we are planning to make a counter-attack, so we request China [ch. zhongyang] to support us, for example, by sending soldiers and whatever is possible. In case you support us and I get the regency back, I will offer such and such district located beyond Chamdo [tib. chab mdo] to express my gratitude." He named the [dzong](#) that he was going to offer. There were quite a few districts. I am not sure whether he offered all the territories [held by Tibet] beyond Chamdo.

The above information was sent by the [Khendrönlosum](#) [officials in Nanjing] through a secret telegram reporting that Triu Gyapön has arrived [in Nanjing] for this purpose.

Q

At that time, who were the [Khendrönlosum](#)? Was Khenjung Thubten Sangye [tib. mkhan chung thub bstan sangs rgyas] one?

A

One of them might have been Gyetagpa [tib. rgyas rtags pa]. I am not sure about this. After receiving the telegram, a Khamba-like a trader came all of a sudden to the house of the [Gyambumgang](#) [tib. rje 'bu sgang]. He handed a box in which there was a letter, saying that he had been told by the Doji Dzasa Yuthok [tib. mdo spyi dza sag g.yu thog] to deliver it to the Regent [Taktra](#). As for the detailed information, the main merchant said that he wants to see the Kungö. The [Khamba](#) acted as if he was a servant. Before the [Trunyichemmo](#) delivered the box to [Taktra](#), a few days passed during which time a leaflet was thrown in the New Palace in which it was written, "There was a very important petition to be delivered to [Taktra](#), but [Gyambumgang](#) Trunyichemmo hasn't delivered it and has

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kept it in his house. According to this, we think there is a problem with the work of the [Trunyichemmo](#)."

When they found the poster, the Chandzö Chenmo (main manager) of [Taktra](#) told the [Trunyichemmo](#) about the poster. Then Gyanbumgang told the Chandzö Chenmo that they had received a box and his [chandzö](#) called Gendün opened the box which was wrapped in cloth. As soon as they opened the box, the fuse started to burn and they heard the sound "sor" and the bomb was going to explode, so Chandzö Gendün threw the box out and closed the door of the room where the [Trunyichemmo](#) was staying. Right after that, the bomb exploded and broke the glass windowpanes of the room. The shrapnel from the bomb hit the shrines and made them like a pockmarked-person.

After that, they delivered the petition from Yuthok and explained about the bomb blast to the Kashag. So the Kashag reported to the Regent about that and said that this incident is related to the telegram from the [Khendrönlosum](#) and that the followers of Reting are plotting something. Therefore, if we don't investigate this matter thoroughly, we can't bear the responsibility for the life safety of the Regent and of the religion and politics of the government. The Regent approved them doing that.

After that, the Kashag called the [Shöl](#) Legung and the Lhasa Nyertshang [tib. lha sa gnyer tshang] and the Lhasa Mipön. The Abbreviation of the three offices was called Lha [Shöl](#) Nyer Mipön. [tib. lha zhol gnyer mi dpon]. They told them to investigate who came to deliver the bomb. Actually, if they just talked they would be unable to inquire about that, but they called the house managers of Lhasa and took some oaths from them and went through the motions of inquiring about this. Then all of a sudden, Lhalu and Surkhang went to "invite" Reting [from his monastery] escorted by the soldiers of the [Trapchi](#) Regiment.

Right after the [Kalön](#) left for Reting, Nyungne Lama sent Phempo Jangra Sharma [tib. 'phen po lchang ra shar ma] to Reting on horseback to inform them about this and send the following message, "Now the situation is not good. It seems that people went to Reting Labrang and the Shapes are also not here so you should be on the alert."

At that time [Ramba](#) and [Kapshöba](#) were [left] in the Kashag and the two of them called the 8 Trungtsi and told them about the two [Kalön](#) leaving for Reting. They told all of the Trungtsi to go to Reting Labrang [in Lhasa] and seal the house and search whether there are still bombs hidden there or not. The Kashag also sent representatives of the Kashag and the Secretariat of the Dalai Lama and the Regent (tib. tseshö kutshab [rste shod sku tshab]) with the Trungtsi.

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Q

When did that happen?

A

This was in the 2nd Tibetan month of the Fire-Hog Year. Probably, it was around 1 p.m.

Q

At that time, since you were in the Kashag, didn't you know that Surkhang and they had left for Reting.

A

No, I didn't.

Q

How did they leave?

A

Leave alone we, even the Gadrung might not have known about that.

Q

Who were the Gadrung then?

A

It was Dumra [tib. ldum ra] and Minkyiling [tib. smon skyid gling]. We just knew that the two [Shape](#) were not there. When we asked people where they went, they said that the Dalai Lama was going to get admitted in Drepung so the Shapes went to inspect the road. Right after that, the Trungtsi were gathered in a hurried manner. Then we thought that there might be an urgent matter. When the Trungtsi went there, the two Dzasa were not there.

Q

You also went there, right?

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A

Yes, I was the representative of the Kashag.

Q

At that time, you didn't know that you are going to seal the house, right?

A

We were told to go to seal the house. There were the [Tsendrön](#) as the representative of the [Tse](#) ga (the Dalai Lama's Secretariat) and a Shöndrön as the representative of the [shö ga](#) (the Regent's Secretariat). We went through the middle of the stone floor of [Shide](#) [tib. bzhi sde]. There wasn't anybody shooting at us and we just went in. At that time, both of the Dzasa were not there. When we asked where they were, they said that the ex-dzasa or Dzasur [tib. dza zur] was in the summer cottage [tib. spro khang]. We sent for the ex-dzasa right away and he came along. Then all the Trungtsi sat on the mattresses in the servant's quarters of the Dzasa and the Dzasur also sat near by. When we asked him where the Dzasa was, he said that he went to the father of the Dalai Lama (tib. [gyeyab](#) [rgyal yab]) in Jangsebshar [tib. lchang gseb shar].

Q

At that time, wasn't the father of the Dalai Lama already dead?

A

Oh! Yes. They said that he went to the family of the Dalai Lama (tib. yabshi [yab gzhis]). The Trungtsi told them to go to call him. Then Tsarong and a servant of the (Reting) Labrang were sent to call him.

Q

What happened after that?

A

Then the Dzasa came right away and the [Trunyichemmo](#) Ta lama Jawteng [tib. lcog steng] told the two Dzasa, "Today, we the Trungtsi are here according to the order from the Kashag saying that there was an incident of a bomb explosion which caused the

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Kashag to be suspicious about the safety of the life of the Regent, so we have to check the house." Then the Dzasa said, "Please go ahead and check the house." Then we were divided into groups and searched all the rooms. We found 2-3 bombs wrapped in yellow cloth.

Q

Were they real bombs?

A

They were the hand grenades [tib. [lag](#) 'bom] used by soldiers. Some people were running out saying, "There are bombs!" Then some said, "It doesn't matter. If you don't pull the fuse, it doesn't matter."

Then two of us were sent to the Kashag with the two Dzasa. We were told to take as many soldiers as we wanted and we were told to inform the Kashag that the Trungtsi are continuing the search of the house. The two of us went to the Kashag with the two Dzasa.

Q

At that time, what did the Dzasa say?

A

The ex-dzasa was not wearing the long brocade gown (ch. dagotse [ch. da gua zi]) but the Dzasa was wearing it. We and the two Dzasa had horses and the soldiers didn't, so they were left behind. The two Dzasa were riding their horses quickly so I was worried that the situation won't be good, but there wasn't any problem and we dismounted the horse at the backside road of Potala [tib. rta lam gong ma]. Then we walked towards the Kashag. At that time, the Dzasa who had been my schoolmate asked me, "Where did the two [Kalön](#) go?" I said, "We don't know. We just heard that they went to inspect the road." Then the Dzasa said, "You are not telling the truth. It couldn't be for going for an inspection on the road." I said, "I really didn't know." Then he said, "Oh! Yes. Now you are going to offer an award to Reting for searching out the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, right?"

Then we went to the Kashag and reported to the Kashag, "The Trungtsi are continuing their search in the [labrang](#) and the two Dzasa are here. Then the two of us were told to stay with the Dzasa. Then the Kashag sent a plan to the [shö ga](#) for demoting the Dzasa. After about half an hour, the two Dzasa were brought to the [shö ga](#) and the

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order was issued as follows, "It is proven that Reting Labrang has done many things to harm the safety of the Regent. Therefore, we don't have any choice but to do a thorough investigation. So for the time being, the Dzasa will be demoted from their position and from the ranks of the monk officials, and we are going to arrest you." And they took off his Dagotse and they were arrested and sent to the [Sharchenjog](#) [tib. shar chen lcog] [prison]. On the next day, we were also sent to arrest Phünkhang Gung.

Q

At that time, Phünkhang was already demoted from being [Shape](#), right?

A

Yes, but he still had the Gung title.

Q

How was Phünkhang involved in this?

A

Reting Labrang sent a letter to Phünkhang addressed to the Kashag when he was the [Shape](#). Enclosed with it was a letter to be sent to the incarnate Lama Dzatö Tsenyi Trulku [tib. rdza stod mtshan nyid sprul sku] asking him to perform rituals for fulfilling the wishes of Reting Labrang. So the Kashag suspected that Phünkhang was collaborating with Reting Labrang.

Q

Who knew about that?

A

Later the letter was obtained from Tsenyi Trulku.

Q

Was he also arrested?

A

Yes, and his house was also sealed in Kham.

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Q

Did the Doji [tib. mdo spyi] do that?

A

Yes. At that time the Doji was Yuthok. Before they sealed his house, the Kashag in Kham got the letter. At that time, Phünkhang didn't know the content of the letter, but they were suspicious.

Q

Later, Phünkhang Gung was proved innocent and he became a Gung again. Before that, Phünkhang's son, the Senampa, was also demoted and his hair knot was untied, but later he also got his title back.

Q

At that time, [Sandu](#) Lo Gendun [tib. sa 'du blo dge 'dun] who was smoking opium, was also involved in the Reting incident and imprisoned in the [Sharchenjog](#) prison.

Q

As soon as they came to seal Reting Labrang, the person in charge of offerings, the Chöpon Yeshe Tshütrim [tib. mchod dpon ye shes tshul khirms] rode a horse and went to Reting. The two [Shape](#) and Yeshe Thubten were going to Reting one after another so he went on a detour through the mountains, but the soldiers saw him and shot at him so he couldn't reach Reting and the [Shape](#) and soldiers arrived there first.

Q

Nyungne Lama also sent a rider, right?

A

He also couldn't reach Reting. So when the [Shape](#) arrived there, Reting didn't know about their coming. At first the Fourth Rupön went in and told Reting, "There is some unrest on the borders of Siling, so we have been sent to guard that place and we want to seek an audience with Reting." They were granted the audience. Right after that, the [Shape](#) arrived and Reting touched his forehead to the [Shape](#). They didn't prostrate to

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Reting, but sought his hand blessing and told Reting, "We are sent to invite you to Lhasa. If you come, we will guarantee that no harm would happen to your life. In case some kind of dilly dallying [tib. ka re ko re] occurs, it won't be good, because we have brought soldiers. After you reach Lhasa, you can talk about the suspicions they have." Reting asked what happened and they told him, "A bomb has exploded which caused suspicion to fall on Reting Labrang. So we came specially to invite you because we didn't have any choice but to invite you." Anyway, the Regent was brought all of a sudden. At that time, when they went to saddle Reting's black horse called Shooting Star [tib. skar mda' gra'u], Surkhang told them to saddle a mule. They sealed the house of Reting and stationed 17 soldiers to guard the seals and all the other soldiers and the two [Shape](#) came back with Reting through the Phempo Gola mountain pass. At that time, probably, the monks of [Sera Je](#) were trying to stop them. Then the soldiers fired machine guns and rode their horses and went down through the Tsesum thang [tib. tshes gsum thang]. A soldier was holding Reting's mule while he was riding his horse and they arrived at [Sharchenjog](#) in the Potala.

Q

The monks tried to stop them, but they couldn't do it, right?

A

Yes. After that the two [Shape](#) went to the Kashag and then gave [khata](#) scarves and prizes to the soldiers. The Investigation Committee consisted of the Trungtsi.

Q

When Reting was brought to Lhasa, what did the people in Lhasa say? What was their opinion?

A

The people liked Reting more than [Taktra](#) because when Reting was recognized as the reincarnation, it was said that he left his footprint on the rock and he stuck a wooden peg in a rock. Therefore, people regarded him as a very holy Lama. While he was the Regent, the people's livelihood was good.

Q

Was it true that Reting left his footprint and stuck pegs in a rock?

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A

That was true. He was born in a poor family in Dagpo. On the day before the people were coming to recognize him, he said, "Tomorrow travelers will come and this is for tying their horses and mules and he stuck pegs in the rock." He also left a very clear footprint on a rock. People could see the footprint in the temple of the Jowo Jampal Dorje [tib. jo [bo](#) 'jam dpal rdo rje] in Reting. As for the pegs, pilgrims took away small pieces of wood so later people could only see the hole on the rock. Therefore, all people liked him very much and they didn't like [Taktra](#) for bringing Reting to Lhasa. There were many people disappointed about this.

Q

I also heard that Reting tied the mouth of a clay pot when the soup was overflowing, right?

A

I also heard that. I am not sure whether we can see this pot, but there was this history. Anyway, he was a holy person.

Q

Of course, he was. What happened after that was that Reting was brought to [Sharchenjog](#) and he couldn't see his Dzasa, right?

A

Yes, they were shut up in different prisons. There were monk and lay official stationed as Reting's guards.

Q

Did they make Reting wear prisoner's clothing and torture him. Did they let him stay in a living room [a main room where the arisocrats and rich people live] (tib. simchung [gzim chung])?

A

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It was not a simchung. Probably, it was a work hostel of a monk official cook of the Dalai Lama. There was some furniture. It was in the [Sharchenjog](#) and it had a small window facing south. It was a one pillar size room. Phünkhang and those other people were shut in the real prison where they locked up as prisoners.

Q

It was not the real prison, right?

A

Yes, but it was in [Sharchenjog](#).